3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
Iraq MH1

161 taken, in 1947, gave the total population as 4,799,500; before that there were periodical official estimates as follows:

1930	2,824,000
1935	3,560,000
1943	3,995,000

The present population is probably about 5 million. According to the census, Baghdad has a population of 364,000, Mosul 302,000, Basra 94,000, and Kirkuk 69,000, Hilla being the only other town of over 50,000 inhabitants. Significant figures for density of population could be determined only after defining habitable land and distinguishing rural populations; the accepted density figure for the country as a whole (27·4 per square mile) means little. In the total cultivable area as calculated by an English authority the average density is 102 per square mile, but in many areas the density is much more than this for the rural population alone, and in the Baghdad and Basra districts exceeds 300 and 800 respectively per square mile.

163 *Vital Statistics.* For a number of reasons, which include the
165 inaccessibility of large areas of Iraq and the lack of doctors
164 in the rural districts, vital statistics are not available for the country as a whole. Statistics of possibly fair accuracy are, however, published for the population of some 1,160,000 served by the health centres in the main cities of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul; the latest, compiled for 1950, show a birth-rate of 27 and a death-rate of 12 per 1,000, with an infant mortality figure of 97 per 1,000 live births. The main causes of death were stated as old age, respiratory diseases other than tuberculosis, malaria, heart diseases, and tuberculosis.

197 *Language.* Arabic is the official and most widely spoken language. The 800,000 odd Kurds speak an Iranian language in various forms. Turkish dialects are spoken in Irbil, Kirkuk, to some extent in Khanaqin and in smaller intervening towns, and Syriac by Christian communities in northern Iraq. Other minority languages, such as Armenian, also occur, while in the Holy Cities of the south (Kerbela and Najaf) Persian is widely spoken.

Religions[1]

642 The constitution declares Islam to be the official religion of the state, but guarantees complete freedom of conscience and worship in conformity with accepted customs subject only to the maintenance of public order and morality, declares the absolute equality of all Iraqis before the law, gives communities

[1] See above, p. 51ff.

63:Simmons et al G-8 (1941-1951) 1954
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of peasants and tribesmen are illiterate. Theoretically, primary education is compulsory for both sexes, but the facilities are inadequate, particularly in the rural areas. Recent estimates indicate that the literacy rate in the country as a whole approximates 10 per cent, in contrast with about 40 per cent in Baghdad and the larger cities. Education is controlled by the government, and public instruction is available at all levels from the primary schools through the professional colleges. There is no university in Iraq, but the incorporation of the present colleges into a national institution, with university status, has been proposed. Separate colleges of medicine, pharmacy, law, science, arts, fine arts, engineering, commerce and teachers' training, as well as various types of vocational schools, are supported by the government. Secondary schools are also maintained by private and mission groups. Government scholarships are provided annually to qualified students for study abroad, usually in Egypt, Great Britain or the United States.

Vital Statistics

Valid vital statistics are almost nonexistent, since the registration of births and deaths is admittedly incomplete, even in the principal cities, as Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. The general reluctance of the inhabitants to report births, deaths and other statistical data and the large size of the nomadic and the semimigratory populations are factors contributing to the inaccuracy of the figures available. Within recent years statistics have been compiled by the government health organization in 75 centers under the jurisdiction of medical officers, but they do not reflect conditions throughout the country. In 1950, these health districts covered a population of 1,160,000, distributed in all 14 of the provinces into which Iraq is divided. The birth rate was estimated at 27 per 1,000 population, and the death rate at 12 per 1,000. Competent authorities, however, believe that the over-all birth rate is nearer 40 to 50 per 1,000 popu-

163 lation, and the death rate, 25 to 35. The
165 discrepancies in reporting are probably less in the case of deaths than of births.

On the basis of the health district populations for 1950, the infant mortality rate was calculated at 98 per 1,000 live births. The death rate of infants under 1 year was 14 per cent of the total deaths, and of children under 5 years, about 23 per cent. Local observers estimate that the mortality in infants under 1 year approximates 300 to 350 per 1,000 live births among most rural and impoverished urban communities, and that it reaches almost 500 per 1,000 live births in children under 5 years of age. Intestinal diseases, undernutrition, respiratory infections and malaria are prominent among the causes of death in infancy and early childhood.

Social Economy

241 Agriculture and the petroleum industry together form the basis of Iraq's economy. Although this region was one of the chief granaries of the world centuries before the Christian Era, the present agricultural resources of the potentially fertile Tigris and Euphrates river basins are only partially developed. About 75 to 80 per cent of the inhabitants are engaged in farming or pastoral pursuits, but progress is retarded by the prevailing forms of land tenure, shortage of labor supply and inefficient methods
311 of cultivation. In 1950, less than one fifth
241 of the arable land, normally estimated at 25 to 30 million acres, was under production. Extensive areas of the alluvial plain are cultivated by means of irrigation, but improper drainage often results in considerable annual loss of soil fertility. A system
427 of tenancy farming predominates in most
423 sections of the country. The proportion of land-owning peasants is small and largely restricted to the northern provinces. In central and southern Iraq many families are
[444] migratory cultivators who work on a share-cropping basis for wealthy and, usually, absentee landlords.

241 Cereals, tobacco and cotton are important

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